

jured by the operation of the present high duty on spirits of wine, let them at once use the means obviously at their disposal; and, if this be done properly, I feel assured, Sir, from the present favourable disposition of our Government to remove, as far as practicable, every hindrance to our national prosperity, that the relief sought for will be granted.

I am, Sir, &c.

P.

HOW A SANITARY ACT MIGHT BE WORKED.

SIR,—Further to carry out the views already advocated in your journal,* I will now briefly state how a Sanitary Act might be worked.

In every city, town, and village, I would have a local sanitary commission, composed of a certain number of persons, according to the numerical extent of the ratepayers, by whom they should be elected. A portion (say a third) of this body should retire from office according to rotation every two years, so that in six years the whole body would be changed or re-elected, as retiring members should be eligible for re-election. By this arrangement, any sudden change of the whole body, by which their business arrangements are likely to get deranged, would be avoided, and when the members had obtained an insight into the routine of their duties so as to render themselves an efficient and useful body, they would not be hastily dismissed from their office, as would be the case if they were annually elected.

These local sanitary commissions should be formed quite independently of any existing commissions of sewers, paving, &c., which would be abolished, and also of any municipal corporations or vestries.

In order to insure the carrying out of the Act in one uniform manner, and in the best possible way as regards the details, I would also have one central commission, to be composed of men to be elected by the ratepayers, one from each county, which central commission should have an establishment, and meet at regular intervals, in London, and whose duty it should be to give instructions from time to time as to the carrying out of the Act, and who should also define the districts of the respective local commissions, and who should have the power of extending the limits of such districts when petitioned to do so by two-thirds of the members of any local commission. The central commission should be elected every six years, and should have an efficient staff, composed of medical officers, engineers, surveyors, chemists, and others who may have made the subject, or any particular department of it, their study. They should also have a laboratory, and have the power to make experiments, examine witnesses, or go into or send their officers into any part of the country in order to inquire into and examine any improvements or new inventions relating to the subject which should be worthy of their notice. Perhaps it may be objected that such a central commission would be too numerous; but to this I reply, that as very considerable powers would be intrusted to the commission, it would be necessary that it should be numerous, in order to guard against any perversion or tyrannical use of its powers, and the commission would be more accessible through its members than would one consisting of three—like the Poor Law Commission—or a larger number. Besides, we have it on good authority that, "in the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom." The Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests and the First Lord of the Treasury should be *ex officio* members of the central commission.

Whatever may be the general opinion as to a commission such as I have proposed, I think it will be admitted by all that a central governing commission of some sort is absolutely necessary for the efficient carrying out of the Act.

To return to the local commissions. In large towns and cities these commissions should be divided into committees for the carrying out of the different branches of the subject; thus there would be a sewerage committee, a paving committee, and so forth, and an efficient establishment would of course be

required, the various officers of which should be elected by the whole body. One or two committee-rooms, and a room for general meetings of the whole commission would be required, and the committees should meet at different times, so that they might each have the attendance of the secretary and of any of the officers.

After the election of these local commissions, their first duty would be the election of officers, and their next the obtaining of a complete plan (showing the levels) of the whole of the city, town, or village which came within their district. The expenses of the local commissions should be defrayed by a rate, and those of the central one by government. Although at first sight it might be thought that the rate for the carrying out of so many objects would be a very heavy one, yet, if properly managed, I do not think that need be the case, as there would be revenues derivable from the sewage manure, from the ashes, and the sweepings of the streets, from the supply of water and gas, and from the baths and washhouses, which would very materially reduce, if not altogether do away with, any necessity for the rate—at least after the first expenses had been incurred. In places where the water and gas are supplied by private bodies, in a satisfactory manner and at a moderate rate, it would not be necessary for the sanitary commissions to interfere, but where such is not the case, should the existing companies decline to accede to the requirements of the commissions, the commissions should be empowered to purchase the works of such companies at a fair valuation, or establish works of their own.

It may, perhaps, be urged that the expense of gas would be too great for its use to be extended to villages; but when we see small railway stations, on some of the lines, lighted by gas made at the stations, simply for their own supply, I do not think that argument can have any weight.

Then as regards cemeteries: these may be objected to as unnecessary in villages; but when we find that there is hardly a village churchyard which has not been raised several feet by the repeated burials, so as to render it necessary in many cases to descend steps into the church, I do not think that argument can stand. However, I would insert a provision in the Act allowing the enlargement of village churchyards where they are situated at a considerable distance from any dwellings, but in such cases I would prohibit any more burials in or under the church and within a distance say of fifty feet of it. The proposed Act should be properly punctuated, and drawn up in a clear and concise manner, and the absurd legal verbosity which characterises most Acts of Parliament should be carefully eschewed.

The Act should also be framed so as to meet any changes that may take place, such as the extension of towns, &c., &c., so that, as far as possible, alterations and amendments should not be rendered necessary; but should such be found requisite at any time, the central committee should frame a bill for that purpose, and apply to Parliament for their sanction to it, or otherwise. It would not be desirable to allow any modifications or alterations to be made in the Act without the consent of Parliament. In particular cases, however, the commission should be empowered to relax the provisions of the Act, should they consider it requisite; for instance, upon sufficient grounds being shown, they might allow the carrying out of some of the provisions of the Act to stand over for a reasonable period,—but such power should be used with great caution.

I cannot close this without reference to a statement recently made by one of the members of the corporation of London. He said that "He did not care about the evacuation of the sewers of London into the Thames. The constant ebb and flow of such a mass of water soon diluted all the impurities which the river received, and he had no apprehension of the consequences of such out-pouring as had been described."

Surely the gentleman who made this statement cannot have been in the vicinity of any of the large sewers in the city, where they empty their contents into the river at low water, very recently, or both his nasal and visual organs must be very defective; if neither

of these surmises are correct, I would recommend him to pay a visit to Puddle Dock, Whitefriars Dock, the mouth of the Fleet Ditch, and the steamboat pier at Earl-street, at the period named, and I think he would change his opinion on this point.

A LONDONER.

CHURCH RESTORATIONS.

St. Mary's Swinhead.—The new chancel of this church was opened on the 6th instant. It has been entirely rebuilt, under the direction of Mr. Stephen Lewin, of Boston, architect, in the general style of the church, which is the Perpendicular. The walls are of Ancaster stone, dressed exteriorly, and faced with tooled rubble within. The roof is of stained fir, open timbered and covered with lead. The stalls are of English oak, and the floor of white Mansfield stone. The walls are buttressed, and the east gable is pierced by a window of five lights, with cinquefoiled tracery, in the style of the bays between the side buttresses. Between the chancel and the nave the ancient carved rood-screen has been re-erected. The carved oak stall of the chancel were made in the village. The stonework was executed by Mr. John Baker, jun., of Sleaford; the wood-work by Mr. Morris, the iron-work by Messrs. Woods and Allen, and the glazing and plumbing by Mr. Horner—all of Swinhead. Trinity College, Cambridge, provided the necessary funds.

Thornbury.—Mr. Francis Niblett, of Gloucester, has been appointed by the vestry of the parish of Thornbury, Gloucestershire, to carry out certain restorations and repairs proposed to be done to the church. On consideration of a report and specification by the architect, it was decided by a majority of the vestry that only those portions of the restorations absolutely necessary should be carried into effect, and that there be no expenditure on unnecessary ornament. In detail, and "to ascertain what was considered necessary and what unnecessary," the specification was gone over, and sections relating to the roofing of the nave, north aisle, and chapel, and the rebuilding of the walls of the clerestory, and to the south aisle and chapel, were carried without opposition; and, on the suggestion of Mr. Gingell, it was determined that the timber should be of foreign oak, and that the old timbers of the nave roof be made available for the restoration of the north aisle roof, the nave roof itself to be of Riga oak. In face of some opposition, too, it was determined to re-pew the church, the cap mouldings and external sides in oak, panelled, moulded, and filled with tracery—the pews provided with doors, and the present deal pew-framing to be used for the divisions and seats, and to be stained. Restorations in the chancel are to be carried out by the Rev. Mr. T. S. Townsend, the vicar. Twenty of the principal ratepayers and parishioners have been appointed as a building committee; "two many by half," as our correspondent remarks.

The following estimates have been given in for the contemplated works, viz.:—For nave roof of Riga oak, covered with 7 lb. lead; clerestory walls and windows; repairs to and restoration of north aisle roof, covered with lead, and parapet; repairing nave aisles and chancel stalls, using old materials; repairs of roof, north chapel, and screen; south chapel repairs (to roof principally); and general repairs to roof, &c., of south aisle—

Plaw'm	£2,578 10 0
Cholerton	2,549 16 0
Laverce	2,294 9 8
Willcox, Bristol	2,130 10 0
Brown	1,555 4 0!!

(On certain conditions, relative to security and to testimonials from an architect, the lowest tender (that of Mr. John Brown, of Broadmead, Bristol) was to be accepted.

BRIDGE OVER THE RHINE.—Two French engineers have just been charged, by the municipality of Cologne, to throw a suspension-bridge over the Rhine in that city, similar to the magnificent one over the Danube at Ofen, in Hungary. The new bridge is to have a pile in the middle of the river, and will cost 150,000 thalers, or 600,000*l.*